THE

DELUGE:

A

POEM.

BY THE

Rev. JOHN ROBERTS, M.A.

FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

CAMBRIDGE,

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EVIDENCE

FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

REV. JOHN ROBERTS, M.A.

BOOK V.

DEFENCE:

THE

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

FREDERICK,

EARL OF CARLISLE, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

THE permiſſion you have given me to prefix your name to this Poem is particularly flattering. Nor can any one, who is acquainted with the elegance of your taſte, and the correctneſs of your judgement, wonder that I have choſen to take refuge under the reputation of a Nobleman, whoſe qualities excite eſteem, and whoſe abilities command admiration.

But I hope, my Lord, I have a better motive. I am ſure it is a motive more agreeable to my feelings; which is a deſire of acknowledging my attachment to your family, and my obligations for the confidence you have repoſed in me.

I am, My LORD,

with the greateſt reſpect, and eſteem,

Your LORDSHIP's

moſt obliged,

and moſt obedient ſervant,

JOHN ROBERTS.

A Clauſe of Mr. SEATON's Will, Dated *Oct.* 8, 1738.

I Give my Kiſlingbury Eſtate to the Univerſity of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which ſhall be diſpoſed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Maſter of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Profeſſor for the time being, or any two of them ſhall agree. Which three perſons aforeſaid ſhall give out a Subject, which Subject ſhall for the firſt Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and ſo the ſucceeding Years, till the Subject is exhauſted; and afterwards the Subject ſhall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of Heart, &c. or whatever elſe may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Maſter of Clare-Hall, and Greek Profeſſor, to be moſt conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they ſhall yearly diſpoſe of the Rent of the above Eſtate to that Maſter of Arts, whoſe Poem on the Subject given ſhall be beſt approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in Engliſh, and to be printed; the expence of which ſhall be deducted out of the product of the Eſtate, and the reſidue given as a reward for the Compoſer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verſes.

WE, the underwritten, do aſſign Mr. SEATON's Reward for the Year 1789, to JOHN ROBERTS, M. A. for his Poem on the DELUGE; and direct the ſaid Poem to be printed according to the Tenor of the Will.

Oct. 24, 1789.

F. Barnes, Vice-Chancellor.
J. Torkington, Maſter of Clare Hall.

THE DELUGE: A POEM.

THE Patriarch reſcued from the general wreck
Of Nature, and a diſobedient World
For foul revolt, and rebel anarchy,
Quick ſwallow'd in one vaſt and boundleſs deep,
I ſing.

Say, Sophiſt vain, who doubt'ſt if God
By watry deſolation burſt the ſhell
Of Earth's huge convex, why the hoary oak,
And rifted pine beneath the caverns deep
Hide their proud heads? on the Cloud-piercing hill,

Oſſa or Pelion, why has Ocean left
His produce, vermeil coral, blanched ſhell,
And weed? why ſleeps the Tyrant of the Nile,
Arm'd with thick ſcales, like ſerried plates of ſteel,
In dank Pannonia's marſhes? — Was it chance?
Or did the rough conflicting wave unite
What clime, what Nature ſever'd? theſe ſad wrecks
Shall penſive Contemplation's votary trace,
And mark the awful ruin, dire effect
Of guilt, and violence. Thy ſons, good Seth,
No more to Abel's God their fatlings bring;
Nor temperate ſhepherds drink the living Stream,
Which from its native rock, pure beverage, falls
In artleſs melody. The verdant board
Nor creſs, nor berries deck; luxurious Art
Uſurps the place of chaſte Simplicity,
And Innocence primeval. Whence that ſhout,
Herald of riot's orgies? from yon tent,
Profuſe of all the tints gay Fancy ſheds,
An airy group of fair adventurers paſs,
With floating robes, that from the gorgeous ſun
Reflect their gallantry. From Eaſtern Nod

This laughing bevy came; anon the lute,
And timbrels dulcet cadence floats around,
Unhallow'd minſtrelſy! flowers crown their hair,
Myrtle and roſe: fair to the admiring eye
They ſeem'd, and caſt in Nature's lovelieſt mould
Their perfect form; but all was falſe within,
Corrupt, laſcivious; daughters they of Cain,
Outcaſt from God, degenerate ſeed of Men.

With theſe the Shepherds dalliance held: too ſoon
By wanton ſmiles, by mincing delicate airs,
And words, than oil more ſmooth, eſtrang'd from God's
Mild ſervice; and that ſov'ran homage due
To one Supreme, by rankeſt vice o'erſpread,
And proſtitution foul: 'twas dance, 'twas ſong,
'Twas revel all: the morn, the evening came,
And ſtill 'twas jollity: from ſmould'ring luſt
Connubial love caught inauſpicious fire,
And veil'd his ſacred myſteries in blood.
Then did rank Inceſt, and Polygamy,
Unnatural pair, ruſh forth; a giant brood,
(Such as Typhæus, feign'd of ancient bards,

Or Otus, ſprung from Neptune,) deeds atchiev'd
Of puiſſant proweſs, and rough hardiment.

Nor could thy form, or gentle eloquence
Like heaven's dew melting on the bladed graſs,
Prevail, O Noah. Much of right, and wrong,
Of God's tempeſtuous and devouring wrath,
In vain you preach'd to hearts perverſely ſteel'd
Againſt conviction: but fierce vengeance now
Brooking nor interceſſion, nor delay,
Wax'd fiery red. "Quick hence; the Ark aſcend,
"Thou, with thy ſons, and daughters, reptile, beaſt,
"Inſect, and bird of every wing, by pairs,
"To propagate their kind." Th' Almighty ſpake:
For ſtill a remnant of the World to ſave
Long ſince he had determined. From the hill
Stout timber Noah fell'd, and ſhap'd the ark
Obedient: huge the veſſel's bulk, and built
With ſpacious entrance; nor was wanting food
For cattle, or for man. God gave the word;
The patriarch enter'd, and the gate was clos'd.

White ſhine the breaking billows, ſilver foam,
Prognoſticating ſtorm; the ſcreaming mew,
And rav'nous bittern ſkim along the brine
Low dropping, or their pinions half incloſe
In the dark ſpray; bright ſpots of ruddy fire
Flecker the azure vault, with duſky hue
Deep ſkirted, couriers of the Storm — anon
With furious expedition falls the rain
Darting impetuous down; the ſcowling ſky
Darkneſs inveſts, deep doleful ſhade, one night,
Night palpable; ſave where athwart the gloom
The glaring vollied lightning ſerv'd to ſhew
Sad piteous ſcenes of horror and diſmay;
Deſpairing victims ſtruggling up the elm,
Or ragged oak, and in a moment ſwept
By fury irreſiſtible; ſome gain
The rock, and thence with haggard look deſcry
Their wives, their panting children in mid way
Purſu'd, or daſh'd againſt the pointed cliff,
Sad ſport of whirlwinds. At thy ſtern rebuke,
Lord of the roaring tempeſt, at thy voice
The waters ſwift aſcend the rough ſteep cliff;

And in the boſom of the vale down ſink
At once: and hark! the Ocean's thundering gate
Has burſt its hinge, and on the continent
Diſgorg'd its might; while on the winged ſtorm
Terror triumphant rides. The diſmal daſh
Of wave on wave, loud howling winds, the Earth
Rent to her center by a thouſand ſhocks,
Each ſhock, a ruin, only ſounds the trump
Of elemental war a pregnant cloud
Dilated, like one dark pavilion hangs,
Dreadful ſuſpenſe! then burſts with all its rage
Collected: cataracts of ſmoking rain
Their wild diſpleaſure ſpend; earth-delving ſpouts,
Swift hurricanes, hails, blaſting vollies, Land
Made ſea, the ſea one wide waſte infinite.

Deep groan the heaving caverns: mineral wrath
Sublim'd, with nitrous vapour from beneath
Aſcends, and ſubterraneous thunder ſhakes
The ſolid center of the teeming earth.

The Spirit of the waters ſtalks abroad
Exulting in the ſtorm, and drives the winds

Tranſverſe along heaven's champain, which 'gin blow
In hardy oppoſition. He with arm
Gigantic, and grim joy, troubles the deep,
Which roſe from earth to heav'n: the laſhing ſurge
Impetuous rolls, and had a Ship been there,
Devouring winds had torn the crackling maſt
To atoms piecemeal, or had blown it, light
As buoyant goſſimer between the ridge
Of riding waves, an horrible gulph and dark
Yawns ghaſtly, and at intervals diſplays
A grave of living horror. Hell her gate
Wide opens; Satan from his flaming throne
Shouting upleaps: Hope on his pale creſt fits,
Short viſitant! with gloomy joy he ſees
The comelineſs, and beauty of the world,
Ravag'd by mutinous, and waſting waves.

Full many a Cubit deep beneath the ſurge
Lay Athos, and that peak, which flouts the ſky,
Proud Teneriff: Earth's maſſy pillars ſunk
With thund'ring craſh beneath th' Atlantic deep.
Loſt was Niphates; loſt the Armenian haunt

Of

Of God, that paragon of Nature's wealth,
Fair Paradiſe; where Eve, eſpouſed late,
Slept upon Amaranth's immortal bloom.

Full forty nights, and forty days, the rain
Fell unremitted: Mountains, rivers, rocks
Sunk in contentious waves. Thy ark alone,
O Noah, (ſo the fovran Architect
Ordain'd,) ſurviv'd the wreck: nor did that ark
Want ſail, or ſteerage, by an hand divine
Guided inviſible. Of cypreſs built
And gopher, buoyant wood, ſhe won her way
Like ſome rich merchant's veſſel, laden deep
With Macao's ſpicy freightage: naptha ſheath'd
The hulk, and cloſe aſphaltos, unctuous maſs,
From chafing waves, from pungent ſalt ſecure.

"Ceaſe rain" pronounc'd th' Almighty; the rain ceas'd.
Again the fleecy cloud with orient pearl
Was ſown, and glowing ſapphire. High the ſun
Rode in meridian glory; and the waves
Subſiding, ſunk as if by gentle ſtealth
Inſenſible. On Ararat the ark

Stopt. From whoſe brow the patriarch ſent his dove,
Light courier; ſhe nor green tree found, nor ſand
To reſt her printleſs foot, but hied her home
With ruffled breaſt, and plumage ſprent with dew.
What bodes her ſecond embaſſy? a ſhoot
Of olive, chearful green, upon her bill
Shines graceful: trembling haſte, and eager joy
Beam from the eye of Noah, as he greets
The ſure criterion of abated flood.
Again ſhe prunes her wing; but not again
To beat her barriers, ſhall the bird return;
No: in the well-known mead, or grove, a neſt
She weaves, and warbles wild her artleſs notes;
Or drinks ambroſial nectar from the rill.

Now was all Nature dreſt in freſheſt green,
Pure from the dregs of groſſer earth, which wind
And wave had ſwept away. Mild Zephyr ſheds
Refreſhing breezes, which the meadows down
Impreſs not, as they blow; ſo brave a world
It ſeem'd, ſo paſſing fair, that the eye hung
Enamour'd of its charms. Thy cautious hand,

Good Patriarch, wide the lattice of the ark
Unfolded, curious dome; upon whoſe roof
Was etch'd the chronicle of month, and day;
While the ſun, quivering thro' her ſable gate,
Reflects the gleam of thouſand golden plumes,
Star-ſpangled inſects, eyes of living fire,
Darting their mingled radiance thro' the gloom.

With mind uprais'd, and firm not haſty ſtep,
The patriarch diſembarks: white ſhone his locks,
The pride of reverend age; and white his beard
As the freſh ſnow on Rhodope: his look
Was joy, chaſtis'd by temperance and fear,
Fear, ſuch as wiſdom prompts, as Angels feel.

Next with his wife came Shem, whoſe numerous ſeed
O'er Aſia ſwarm. Amid the blazing mines
of Coromandel, from the golden ſtream
Of Ganges, to Siberia's northern tract
Spread the far diſtant tribes: ſome pitch their tent,
Where the pale creſcent bends o'er Mecca's ſhrine
In Araby; or where the Perſian breath'd
To Suſa's ſatraps, and tiara'd kings,

Soft

Soft adulation. Some Sumatra fill,
And Borneo cinctur'd by the burning line;
Or drive the furious Tartar, ſavage clan,
From Pekin's wall. Who knows, but ſome frail bark
From Corea's amber ſea, by thwarting winds
Into the vaſt Pacific madly driven,
Might light on California's pointed ſhore;
And give to Mexico her feathered chiefs,
Long e'er Columbus ſwept the Atlantic deep?

Who lightly vaults along the verdant plain,
Freſh from the Ark? father of diſtant tribes,
Illuſtrious Ham! for him ſhall Africa
Extend her dreary waſte of naked ſand;
Him Sire of light Ægyptian prieſts ſhall hail
Alorus; to his name in Lybia's wild,
Suppos'd Ammonian Jove, ſhall temples riſe
Oracular: from Barca to the Cape,
Where Capricorn deſcends in feverous fire,
His line ſhall ſpread: for him ſhall Niger foam
With thund'ring torrent, like another Nile,
And with dark billows deſolate the land.
Ah land of ſorrow! whence in other times

Thy ſable warriors to ſome diſtant iſle
Europa's ſhips ſhall waft; to clank the chain
Of ſervitude, to bow beneath the laſh,
And curſe the Chriſtian, who from innocent tears
Relentleſs turns, and weakly deems, that clime,
That colour can debaſe the free born mind.

In order laſt, not leaſt in fame, deſcends
Great Japhet; deſtin'd in Europa's ſoil
To lay the ſeat of many a mighty throne,
Princedom, and Royalty. His poliſh'd ſons
Shall lead fair Science to the bank, where flows
Ilyſſus, claſſic ſtream; ſhall wild flowers ſtrew
In ſome Ægean iſle, where Homer ſung;
And draw from Maro's harp ſweet melody,
To lull Trinacria's deep. The Gothic ſwarm
Of Frank, and Vandal, and the blue ey'd hoſt
That ſkirt the Baltic, Lapland's frozen ſons,
And that fair iſle, which awes the continent,
And on her hoar cliff nurſes Liberty,
Queen of the Sea, Britannia, from his ſeed
Shall riſe.

All theſe, the progeny, and pride

Of

Of Noah, diſembark'd; theſe faithful found
Among degenerate thouſands. Next a group
Of colours motley, and fantaſtical,
Were fil'd in rank groteſque, and ſnuft the air
With eager appetite: Bird, reptile, beaſt,
E'en to the imperial monarch of the wood,
From the poor piſmire. Each his element
Seeks unreluctant: reptiles delve in earth;
The gaudy fluttering inſect from the ſun
Kindles the gleam of his tranſparent wing;
The tawny beaſt explores his ſylvan haunt;
And birds exulting, leſſen in the ſky.

But ah! what viſion lights yon ſable cloud,
Reflecting from the Sun's magnetic beam
Cœleſtial radiance? from the ſilver drops
Of quivering rain, refracted rays of light
Drink life, drink luſtre; and in many an hue,
Break from the ſhowery priſm! ſome with a faint
Vibration ſtrike the eye, and mildly ſketch
The violet's tint, which hems the fringed arch
Half fading; ſome with bold vermilion paint

Th'

Th' interior ſide, and twine in radiant ſpires
Of roſeate hue, which fire the kindling ſky.
While mellower tints of intermediate light
More ſoft, as more refracted, crown thy green,
Ætherial Spring, with the warm burniſh'd gold
Of ruddy autumn: nor unheeded paſs
The cone of tender blue, and bolder line
Of deep imperial purple. See it bends
In bright inchantment! beauty-mingled maze,
How ſhall I right addreſs thee? Bow of God,
Or rather faithful Witneſs in the cloud
Doſt thou delighted hear? thy gorgeous train
Sweeps the mid ſky, in living luſtre clad,
Half circular. O fear not, Earth, again
To ſhed thy green luxuriance, nor to play
Thy artleſs virgin fancies, wildly free,
As Nature ſhall direct; for now mild ſpring,
And harveſt ſhall repay the labourer's toil;
Now deep ſhall bluſh the purple vintage; low
Shall bend the cluſt'ring fruit's compliant boughs,
And laughing Plenty raiſe her balmy horn.

Fear not, O Earth; contentious waves no more
With bitter blaſt ſhall ſweep thy gallant ſons,
Like trembling leaves, away; thy ſure appeal
Is yon bright curve, thy ſure protection, God.
Oft ſhall the bright reflection paint the lap
Of Arcady, where old Penëus curls
His ſilver wave tranſlucent; there the ſwain
On ſloping lawn, or level down, ſhall mark
The gaudy phantom melting into air,
Of paſture freſh, and grey unclouded dawn,
Sure preſage! oft ſhall God gladden the groves
Of myrrh, and the ſweet wilderneſs of balm
With ſhowers, and from his gay enamelled bow
Shed humid fruitfulneſs; ſome aged ſpire
Shall riſe behind in penſive ivy clad,
And awful ſilence crown the lovely ſcene.

Far o'er the horizon of the troubled ſea,
What time the ſtorm retires, the bow ſhall dip
Its woof in ſkygrain'd tincture, from the back
Of ſome dun cloud emerging by degrees,
All bright, all vivid: this Philoſophy,

Deep

Deep muſing maid, ſhall oft at eve deſcry,
And with her cryſtal priſm contract, dilate
Its frangible and particoloured rays,
Thy boon, Aſtronomy's adventrous child,
Sage Newton! this religion's votary
Shall greet with rapture, ſhall with pray'r purſue;
And to his progeny the cauſe explain.
" Rejoice my Son, and on thy heart pourtray
" Yon myſtic characters, that ſtamp the cloud.
" Once was the world degenerate, once was ſunk
" In waſting waters; but by yon fair bow
" The Almighty ſwore, that not again ſhould Man
" Provoke his vengeance to let tempeſts looſe
" Againſt this goodly earth. Hence in the cloud
" He checks the maſs of waters; hence rebukes
" The roaring ſea, if haply his proud ſurge
" High ſwell impetuous; ſeals the vaſt abyſs;
" And locks the fountains of the unfathom'd deep."

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